

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /078 W

-----082024 130647Z /23

R 121115Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1091

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 3463

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, TS, LY

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA VISITS LIBYA

REF: TUNIS 3246 (NOTAL)

1. TUNISIAN RADIO-TELEVISION ANNOUNCED EVENING MAY 11 THAT PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA WOULD BE DEPARTING TUNIS AFTERNOON MAY 12 FOR 3-DAY VISIT TO TRIPOLI AT INVITATION OF ABDELATI LABIDI, PRESIDENT OF LIBYAN GENERAL PEOPLES CONGRESS. ANNOUNCED PURPOSE OF VISIT IS TO HEAD TUNISIAN DELEGATION TO FOURTH MEETING OF JOINT TUNISIAN-LIBYAN HIGH COMMISSION.

2. MEMBER OF NOUIRA'S PERSONAL CABINET TOLD POLOFF EVENING MAY 11 THAT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING COULD EASILY HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITHOUT NOUIRA'S PRESENCE BUT THAT IT SERVES AS CONVENIENT EXCUSE FOR NOUIRA'S VISIT WHICH HAS GREATER POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. HE EXPLAINED THAT QADHAFI HAD CLEARLY BEEN IMPLICATED IN ACHOUR/MASMOUDI MANEUVERS LATE 1977-EARLY 1978 TO BRING DOWN NOUIRA AND THAT VISIT
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NOW SERVED AS PUBLIC RECOGNITION BY QADHAFI THAT HIS PLANS HAD FAILED. (HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT TAHAR BELKHODJA HAD SOMEHOW BEEN INVOLVED BY INSTRUCTING POLICE/SECURITY FORCES NOT TO INTERFERE WITH UGTT ORGANIZED DEMONSTRATIONS. HE ADDED THAT ANOTHER HIGH "PERSONAGE", WHOSE NAME CANNOT BE MENTIONED, WAS A PARTY TO THESE SCHEMES -- A CLEAR REFERENCE TO WASSILA BOURGUIBA.) VISIT FURTHERMORE DEMON-

STRATES THAT QADHAFI IS NOW FINALLY CONVINCED NOUIRA'S POSITION IS STRONGER THAN EVER AND THAT QADHAFI, WHO SEEKS TRANQUIL RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA BECAUSE OF GROWING INTERNAL PROBLEMS, MUST PER FORCE TREAT WITH NOUIRA.

3. SAME SOURCE TOLD POLOFF THAT ALTHOUGH GOT HAS IRONCLAD EVIDENCE OF LIBYAN INVOLVEMENT IN ACHOUR'S MACHINATIONS, IT DOES NOT WISH TO MAKE THIS INFORMATION PUBLIC BECAUSE TUNISIA ALSO NEEDS IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH LIBYA FOR POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL REASONS. THEREIN, HE SAID, LIES NOUIRA'S PRINCIPAL EMBARRASSMENT. NOUIRA HAS THE EVIDENCE TO PROVE THE CHARGES OF ACHOUR'S PLOTTING AGAINST THE SECURITY OF THE STATE, ETC. BUT HE CANNOT USE IT FOR FEAR OF CAUSING SERIOUS DAMAGE TO DEVELOPMENT OF PROFITABLE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, VISITS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, PLOTS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TUNIS03463
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780203-0482
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780562/aaaacaln.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8d21969f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TUNIS 3246
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2700880
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA VISITS LIBYA
TAGS: PGOV, OVIP, TS, LY, (NOUIRA, HEDI), (ACHOUR, HABIB), (LABIDI, ABDELLATT),
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8d21969f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014